

World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life

February 2 2022

Introduction

This day, when we call forth prayer for Consecrated Life, is one that interweaves “the secular and the sacred” in ways that may help us see our way forward into the future.

As Consecrated Life is in a time of change, particularly in our North American experience, we look to the Church Calendar to see that today, February 2, is also the Feast of the Presentation in the Temple, the Fourth Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. This Gospel story in Luke 2:22-40, tells of the encounter of the Holy Elders, Simeon and Anna, with the Messiah they have longed for...in a way they did not expect. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A22-40&version=NRSVCE>



Centring

Please light a candle to begin our time of prayer.

Let us centre ourselves listening and watching Michael Card's prayer around this Feast...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBZiPRPogn0>

That old man in the temple
Waiting in the court
Waiting for the answer to a promise
And all at once he sees them
In the morning sunshine
A couple come and carry in a baby

Now that I've held Him in my arms
My life can now come to an end
Let Your servant now depart in peace
Cause I've seen Your salvation
He's the Light of the Gentiles
And the glory of His people Israel

Mary and the baby come
And in her hand five shekels
The price to redeem her baby boy
The baby softly cooing
Nestled in her arms
Simeon takes the boy and starts to sing

Now's the time to take Him in your arms
Your life will never come to an end
He's the only way that you'll find peace
He'll give you salvation cause
He's the Light of the Gentiles
And the glory of His people Israel

Let us pray:

Loving God, this unexpected encounter could be our way forward as we pray for Consecrated Life this year. As the faithful elders, Simeon and Anna, are the ones to see the Incarnation break forth in a totally surprising way, so we pray for their wisdom. A long life of fidelity has stripped them of their “ego-self” so that they can see what others do not. We unite with the prayers of our founder, Father Jean-Pierre Medaille in his Maxims for the Little Institute:

M 8. Root the strength of your resolutions and the hope of the success of your undertakings in the knowledge of your great weakness and the total mistrust of self, as well as in the firm and assured confidence you ought to have in God, for whom nothing is impossible and who will always assist you in everything you undertake for God's glory through the movement of God's grace and according to the orders of obedience. (MLI)

Amen.

Reflection

Marcia Allen (CSJ-Concordia) reminds us that Medaille acknowledges the gift of our humanity with the phrase “great weakness and the total mistrust of self” not in a manner that is to chastise, but to place us in the humility of being rid of our ego, so that, like Simeon and Anna, we may see “God’s glory through the movement of God’s grace”. Maxim 8 is one of the “maxims of discernment” offering up our prayer in “healthy self-knowledge and a reminder that everything tends toward God’s design and desire”. It is a call to live open to the Holy Spirit.

As Fr. Medaille directs his Little Institute of Consecrated Life with the Maxims, note that he concludes with the phrase, “according to the orders of obedience”...a call to our Mother Mary in her virtue of discerning obedience to the will of God...in our case, as the family of St. Joseph, to “the Total Double Union” of God, Neighbour and Self.



Intercessions

As we pray for Consecrated Life this year, our charism of “unioning love” is needed more than ever, please call to mind any intentions you may have...

Let us conclude our intercessions with that prayer of the Rosary, mindful of the Fourth Joyful Mystery, as it is mystery indeed: Hail Mary, full of grace...

Concluding prayer:

Unioning God,
this Feast of the Presentation, when we pray for light around Consecrated Life, is also the ancient celebration of Candlemas. Bless our lives and our discernment, as you bless these candles in this wintertime. Our popular culture has transferred this time of blessing into “Groundhog Day”! May we recognize that on the cloudy days, when we do not see our shadow/self, we may in fact be welcoming an “early spring” in our own lives. We offer this prayer, and our very lives, in the name of Jesus your Son, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



For further reflection, you may want to pray with the “modern translation” of the Maxims by the students of S. Susan Wilcox CSJ, as put together by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston...here is their reflection for Maxims 6-10. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFaaT_4rwVo

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Candle...freestockphotos.biz

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